

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS  
OF ADOLESCENT UNMARRIED MOTHERS

A THESIS

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, the late Mrs. Jennie Powell, without whose years of encouragement and belief in me this thesis would not have been possible.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Study

Adolescence is, and always has been, primarily a period of change in the life of any individual. It is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood. For a time the adolescent possesses features of both the child and the adult, swinging back and forth from one to the other, and sometimes intermingling both indiscriminately.<sup>1</sup> The way an individual copes with his adolescence is contingent on the way he has integrated his previous life experiences.

One of the problems facing the adolescent is the struggle for emancipation from parents and family. This struggle is reflected in behavior which is ostensibly designed to show independence and even defiance of parental restrictions such as sexual exploration, late hours, etc. This kind of behavior however, can lead to even more dependence and prolonged need for protection and support. For instance, having a baby out-of-wedlock as the result of an effort to prove one is grown-up is obviously self defeating. Motherhood creates only a possibility of maturity itself.

Another problem facing the adolescent is to achieve acceptance by

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<sup>1</sup>Leontine Young, Out-of-Wedlock, (New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1954), p. 93.

one's peers and establish satisfactory relationships with both sexes. Identification with a group of his own sex and finding himself attractive to members of the opposite sex helps the adolescent accept and value his own sexual identity, and heightens his feelings of self-esteem.

A third problem facing the adolescent is educational progress and vocational direction, a planning toward vocational identity, achievement, and financial independence. Freedom to satisfy curiosity and to achieve in school leads to a sense of mastery and self-esteem.

In recent years more attention is being focused on behavioral manifestations of adolescents. The recurrent expressions of their outbursts are portrayed in the daily newspapers and other mass media. It has now become practically axiomatic in our society that all adolescents are problems. The adolescent is often observed with caution,<sup>2</sup> and understanding him is at times obscured by apprehension and confusion.

In our present day setting of world crisis, the distress of the adolescent may be viewed as a functional manifestation of the broader pattern of imbalance and turbulence in human relations.<sup>3</sup> Proper adult guidance and direction are of necessity in order for the adolescent to cope with this distress. The pathetic thing, however, is the attitude of the adult world increases rather than lessens the difficulties of the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Nathan W. Ackerman, M.D., "Adolescent Problems: A Symptom of Family Disorder", Family Process, (Palo Alto, California: The Mental Research Institute of the Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation and the Family Institute, 1962), 202.

adolescent. The adult attitude is replete with warnings of potential consequences, but scant on guidance and direction. The adult attitudes toward the adolescent are apparent in the titles given to this stage of development, e.g., "The Shook-Up Generation," "The Age of Rebellion,"<sup>4</sup> and "The Confused Generation."

The primary fear of most adults is that the maturing and powerful sexual urge of the adolescent will escape control. The widespread publicity on out-of-wedlock births among the adolescent group has evoked considerable concern and activity among both lay as well as professional people. A recent report indicates that the number of teenage unmarried mothers has increased greatly, that they represent forty per cent of all unmarried mothers, and that this is the largest proportion for any group.<sup>5</sup> In 1960, teenagers represented sixty-eight per cent of the total population of unmarried mothers of child bearing age while women between twenty-two and forty-four represented thirty-two per cent.<sup>6</sup>

What is significantly unique about the adolescent unmarried mother is that she is still in a formative and changing period of life and has to be considered separately from the older woman. First, since the

<sup>4</sup>Harrison E. Salisbury, The Shook-Up Generation, (Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1958), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Elizabeth Herzog, "Unmarried Mothers: Some Questions to be Answered and Some Answers to be Questioned," Child Welfare, Vol. XLI, No. 8 (October, 1962), 342.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



adolescent unmarried mother is engaged in the growth problems common to all adolescents, we must understand the major developmental tasks of adolescence, and how they are reflected by out-of-wedlock pregnancy, Secondly, the adolescent unmarried mother faces all the painful reality problems and responsibilities of unmarried motherhood. Bowman pinpoints these facts in the following statement:

For many young unmarried mothers the pregnancy and even the baby seem to lack reality or importance. Their major upset is over separation from their families, absence from school and falling behind in grade placement, possible ostracism by friends, and whether any "really nice boy" will ever ask them for a date. The frightening prospect of giving birth to a baby, thinking through the various alternative plans and envisioning their social and psychological consequences, attempting to understand their own feelings and behavior are all additional problems, and quite overwhelming.<sup>7</sup>

Out-of-wedlock births have a long past, but a very short written history. Historically, interest in the problem of unwed mothers, like other problems of welfare, was seemingly handled without particular regard to the problem itself. The rationale for methods of handling the problem of out-of-wedlock births in earlier times is found in legislature pertaining to same in the year 1576.

When a woman is delivered, or declares herself with child, of a bastard, and will by oath before a justice of peace charge any person as having got her with child,

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<sup>7</sup>Lola A. Bowman, "The Unmarried Mother Who is a Minor", Child Welfare, Vol. XXXVII, No. 8 (October, 1958), 14.

the justice shall cause such person to be apprehended, and commit him till he gives security, either to maintain the child, or appear at the next quarter sessions to dispute and try the fact ...And if such putative father, or lewd mother, run away from the parish, the overseers by direction of two justices may seize their rents, good, and chattels, in order to bring up the said bastard child. Yet such is the humanity of our laws, that no woman can be compulsively questioned concerning the father of her child, till one month after her delivery: which indulgence is however very frequently a hardship upon parishes, by giving the parents opportunity to escape.<sup>8</sup>

Problems of the unwed mother are being viewed differently today.

The predominant research questions about out-of-wedlock births are:

"Who are they?" and "Why are they?" A number of surveys of the available<sup>9</sup> literature have noted a historical clustering of explanations, which attempted to answer simultaneously the questions of who and why. Before 1930, explanations of out-of-wedlock births emphasized mental deficiency, immorality, and bad companions. During the 1930's it was environmental and sociological factors such as poverty, broken homes, and disorganized neighborhoods that were emphasized. During the late 1930's and early 1940's, out-of-wedlock births were also viewed as a cultural phenomenon, a way of life among given racial or subcultural groups. The 1940's saw the predominance of psychological and psychiatric explanations. The mid and late 1950's witnessed a growing awareness that unwed mothers come from all walks of life, and explanations of their behavior began

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<sup>8</sup>Grace Abbott, The Child and the State, Vol. II, (Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 508.

<sup>9</sup>This information was obtained and summarized from Clark E. Vincent, Unmarried Mothers, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 1-30; Hannah M. Adams and Ursula M. Gallagher, "Some Facts and Observations About Illegitimacy", Children, Vol. X No. 2 (April, 1963), 43-48 and Elizabeth Herzog, op. cit.

to include notions about the "sick society" and about social attitudes and practices that implicitly encouraged permissive sexual behavior.

Today it is recognizable that problems of the unwed mother cannot be attributed to any one symptom. Much has been assumed and written about the relations that psychological disturbances, broken homes, and parent-child relationships have to unwed motherhood. One of the psychological theories point out that, the adolescent lacks the maturity to estimate the ultimate effect of coitus upon his total personality integration. Heterosexual activities may represent (1) efforts to compensate for nonsexual affectional frustration, (2) surrender to peer group pressure to maintain status, or (3) abdication of the capacity for self-discipline and individual responsibility.<sup>10</sup>

In a study of broken homes as a factor associated with unwed parenthood, it was found that in all social groups, many more unmarried mothers<sup>11</sup> than married mothers came from broken homes. As many as forty per cent of the unmarried mothers in the study grew up either in homes in which one or other parent was missing, or did not grow up in their parental home at all.<sup>12</sup>

A study by Leontine Young regarding parent-child relationships as

<sup>10</sup>B. Y. Glassberg, "Sexual Behavior Patterns in Contemporary Youth Culture", Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (April, 1965). 190.

<sup>11</sup>Virginia Wimperis, The Unmarried Mother and Her Child, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

a factor associated with unwed motherhood suggests that, unwed motherhood is an "acting out" of unresolved emotional conflicts and an attempt to resolve psychological disturbance whose genesis was in the mother's early relationship with one or both parents. <sup>13</sup> Young stated further:

Clearly, the early development of the child, particularly during the important preschool years, is warped by this pattern of family relationships. It is no accident that the unconscious fantasy acted out by an unmarried mother is definitely infantile in character. The first indispensable for happy childhood - happy, mature, and loving parents - is almost without exception lacking. The girl from the beginning is enmeshed in the problems of the parents, and, for her, normal psychosexual development is usually impossible. Indeed, the fantasy and the acting out of that part to find some solution to the fears, confusions, and tensions growing out of the experiences and problems of those early years when normal development was frustrated.<sup>14</sup>

A recent study, the first systematic inquiry into the likeness and difference in personalities of unmarried mothers and a matched group of single, never-pregnant girls, was done by Clark E. Vincent.<sup>15</sup> His general conclusion is, "unwed motherhood is not the result of any one personality type, intrafamilial relationship or social situation."

It is recognizable that there are multiple factors related to adolescent unwed parenthood and personality development is a complex process which can be viewed from several points. One specific point is outlined in the Freudian theory. The theory postulates that the content and the quality of the child's relationships with his mother and father

<sup>13</sup>Young, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Vincent, op. cit., pp. 99-123.

and with siblings are both chronologically the first, and in terms of personality development the most important, influences that are brought<sup>16</sup> to bear on the child.

Social agencies dealing with unwed mothers are not only concerned about personality development but about the effectiveness of their services to them and their families. One specific agency, Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio, is aware that to some extent the effectiveness of their services is dependent upon an understanding of the intra-familial relationships of the adolescent unmarried mother. They are concerned about sharpening their abilities to form certain conclusions as to the kind of family relationships which will reduce the likelihood of breakdown in family life and will be helpful to the adolescent unmarried mother in her formative years.

The causes of unwed motherhood cannot be pinpointed. However, an exploratory study of a portion of the family relationships (parent-child) can shed some light on future steps to be taken in improving services since gaps in services are frequently associated with gaps in knowledge.

#### Purpose of the Study

Family Service of the Cincinnati Area, Cincinnati, Ohio is an agency that assist individuals with personal and family problems. The majority of adolescent unmarried mothers who come to the agency for help have a

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<sup>16</sup>Irene M. Josselyn, M.D., "The Family as a Psychological Unit", Social Casework, Vol. XXXIV, No. 8 (October, 1953). 342.

history of difficulties in their relationships with their parents. There seems to be a signal for social workers to take action towards pointing out those factors that may lead to unhappy parent-child relationships.

The aim of this study is to examine and describe the kinds of relationships the adolescent unmarried mothers have experienced with their parents in an effort to determine at what point (s) social work intervention would prove most constructive in working effectively towards helping the adolescent unmarried mother and her parents.

In order to provide more structure to this study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. A high proportion of adolescent unmarried mothers receiving casework treatment at Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio have experienced inconsistent patterns of rewards and discipline from their parents.
2. The mothers of the adolescent unmarried mothers who are receiving casework treatment at Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio are usually outside of the home most of the time because of involvement with outside activities, i.e., employment, church activities, social, etc.
3. A high proportion of the adolescent unmarried mothers who are receiving casework treatment at Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio do not participate in activities in or outside of the home with their mothers and fathers.

#### Methodology

In order to carry out this study the researcher used a schedule to obtain information from active adolescent unmarried clients that described the various aspects of their relationships with their parents. Data were collected at Family Service in Cincinnati, Ohio from September 1, 1965 to

February 25, 1966. Records were read to select those cases of adolescent unmarried mothers who were between the ages of thirteen and twenty. The total population of adolescent unmarried clients active with Family Service in Cincinnati, Ohio during the period of this study was twenty-seven. Only eight cases were between the ages of thirteen and twenty and these were used as the sample for this study.

To test the stated hypotheses a schedule was divided into three parts. Parts A and B were used to obtain information that identified the adolescent unmarried mother and described pertinent factors of her family background. These sections of the schedule were pretested to examine the validity and reliability of their contents. A portion of part C of the schedule was taken from a previous study, Unwed Mothers<sup>17</sup> by Clark E. Vincent, and therefore was not pretested by the researcher.

#### Operational Definitions

1. An adolescent unmarried mother is defined as a single, never married adolescent or expectant mother between the ages of thirteen and twenty.
2. Parent-child relationship is defined as the inter-personal connections between the adolescent unmarried mother and the parental figures (natural parents, step-parents, adoptive parents or any other adult who assumes the role of parental figure).

#### Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to adolescent unmarried mothers between the

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<sup>17</sup>Vincent, op. cit., pp. 274-279.

ages of thirteen and twenty who were receiving casework treatment at Family Service in Cincinnati, Ohio. This eliminated adolescent unmarried mothers who were receiving casework treatment elsewhere.



## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF FAMILY SERVICE, CINCINNATI, OHIO

Family Service of the Cincinnati Area, a member of the Family Service Association of America, is a voluntary non-sectarian family casework agency serving a five county United Appeal area. The agency is supported by income from gifts, bequests, and memorial funds, United Appeal Funds, and by fees paid by those using the services. The agency extends services to all applicants irrespective of race, creed or national origin, and are available to all income groups. Services are extended to all applicants whether or not they are able to pay a fee. The staff consist of professional caseworkers who assist families and individuals with problems which disturb family life, hinder normal personal development or prevent satisfactory social adjustment.

The agency's focus on individual problems and strengthening family life is not a recent development for Family Service. Family Service of the Cincinnati Area was organized in 1879, as the Associated Charities of Cincinnati and Hamilton County with the idea that there was more to

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<sup>18</sup>James Albert Green, History of the Associated Charities of Cincinnati - (1879-1937), (Cincinnati Family Service), Chapters I and II, pp. 5-21.

helping people than relief giving. It was believed that people needed understanding as much as they needed money, and that economic breakdown is often the result of destructive factors both within the family and the social structure. Among these factors marital conflict, parent-child relationship and family breakdown were recognized as important social problems.

Breakdown in family life also began to be seen in terms of social conditions, such as poor housing, poor working conditions, inadequate health care and lack of educational opportunities. Later as the various Freudian concepts became known to the casework field, emphasis shifted to psychological factors in social maladjustment. During this period where the disastrous years of the depression. The Family Service Agency which had protested for a long time, the inefficient and wasteful administration by the overseers of poor, joined with others in the community and took leadership in planning for a public welfare agency. With the development of a public assistance program, Family Service was able to recognize and pursue the long standing interest in the causes and treatment of social maladjustment.

Family Service founded on the idea that relief-giving is an important social problem to be studied, and treated with scientific skill, has grown and expanded its services throughout the years.

Today, there is a greater recognition that personal and family problems are more than a family affair. The nature and quality of the individual experiences within the family are dynamically determined, affected not only by the family's economic conditions and the personality

of family members, but by the social and cultural milieu. Families in continual conflict produce the social breakdown of which physical and emotional illness, separation of children from their parents and dependency are often the end results. Everybody in the community pays the cost when these problems go unsolved. Family Service assumes a particular obligation and responsibility to study the nature of social and emotional problems, to institute measures for reducing them and to restore deteriorated family relationships before they got out of hand.

To achieve this goal, Family Service has four major functions, each of which enriches the performances of the other. The major one, the core of its program, is casework services. These assist families and individuals in the solution of their individual and family relationship problems, including marital difficulties, problems of troubled children, unmarried motherhood, budgeting and home-management problems and those difficulties associated with illness and aging.

The objective of intervention is to improve the functioning of the family as a unit. The casework treatment emphasis is placed on developing family strengths and takes into account the effect of the relationship of husband and wife on each other, as well as the effect on the personality development of the children. The family is seen as a total functioning unit basic to our culture.

The agency's second function, educational and group activities program, includes family life education discussion series, recruitment and student training, and the preparation of teaching material for use in graduate schools and with other professional disciplines.

Participation in community planning concerned with improvement of services to families and individuals is the agency's third function. This is achieved through meetings with civic groups, where board and staff members share knowledge gained from experiences with families, to improve community social planning and to provide the new resources needed.

The fourth function of the agency is research which has as an objective, the development of methods by which the community's major social problems affecting families maybe controlled and reduced. During recent years prevention of social breakdown has been a major goal at Family Service. Particularly in the interest of children, Family Service is concerned not only with the quality of the services rendered, but also with the extent to which it can prevent family problems developing.

Casework treatment of adolescents and of parents in behalf of the adolescent is a necessary part of the program of Family Service. In recent years the agency has been helping an increased number of adolescents, many of whom are emotionally disturbed, and others with transitory problems of social adjustment. Often the disturbed adolescent can profit by a treatment experience in which the aim is to help the adolescent master various developmental problems. The agency has a primary interest in maximizing the adequacy of the total family functioning and initially works with those members who seem most likely to help achieve this goal. The primary aim is to help those individuals in terms of improved social adaption in the home and in the community.

### CHAPTER III

#### DESCRIPTION OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

##### Characteristics of the Sample

The sample population consisted of eight adolescent unmarried mothers. It was found that these girls ranged from fourteen to twenty years of age with a mean age of 17.8; three out of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were white and five were Negro; seven of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were Protestant and one out of the eight was Catholic. (see Table 1).

TABLE I

##### DISTRIBUTION OF AGE, RACE AND RELIGION OF THE ADOLESCENT UNMARRIED MOTHERS

Age in Years	Race		Religion	
	White	Non-White	Protestant	Catholic
14, under 15	1	0	1	0
15, under 16	0	0	0	0
16, under 17	0	0	0	0
17, under 18	0	1	1	0
18, under 19	1	2	2	1
19, under 20	1	2	3	0
Total	3	5	7	1

It was found that four out of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were classified as students. Out of the remaining four who were not classified as students, two were employed and two were unemployed. (see Table 2)

TABLE 2  
EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION OF THE ADOLESCENT UNMARRIED MOTHERS

Education	Occupation		
	Student	Employed	Unemployed
9th grade	1	0	0
10th grade	0	1	1
11th grade	1	0	1
12th grade	2	1	0
Total	4	2	2

#### Family Background

Three of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers lived with both natural parents; one girl out of the eight lived with one natural parent and one step parent; two girls out of the eight lived with one parent (mother) and two girls lived with non-relatives.

It was found that three of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers had lived with their natural parents all their lives. Of the remaining five, one adolescent unmarried mother lived with both natural parents up to age eighteen and one adolescent unmarried mother had lived with one natural parent since the age of two. Three of the adolescent unmarried mothers had

experienced inconsistent living patterns with their parents or parent-substitutes. These inconsistent patterns can be seen in the following cases.

Case A is a nineteen year old, Negro girl of Protestant faith who stopped attending school in the tenth grade and who was unemployed. She lived with both her natural parents the first nine years of her life; for nine and one half years, she lived in various foster homes and for the past six months, she had lived with her natural mother.

Case B is a seventeen year old, Negro girl of Protestant faith who was still attending school. She lived with both her natural parents the first five years of her life and with one natural parent (mother) for one year. Since the age of six, she has lived with her mother (natural and step father).

Case C is an eighteen year old Negro girl of Catholic faith who stopped attending school in the eleventh grade and who was unemployed. She lived with both her natural parents the first ten years of her life and with one natural parent (mother) for six years. For the remaining two years of her life, she lived with one grandparent and an aunt and uncle.

Four of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers parents were married and had been living together throughout their lives. Parents of two of the eight were divorced, one couple had been divorced for fifteen years and the other couple for eleven years. Parents of two of the eight were separated, one couple had been separated for ten years and one couple for eight years. (see Table 3).

According to the reported family income at intake upon which the fees were determined, two of the adolescent unmarried mothers were from families with an income under \$2000; one adolescent unmarried mother was from a family with an income under \$2999; three adolescent unmarried

mothers were from families with an income between \$3000-\$5999 and two adolescent unmarried mothers were from families with an income of \$6000 and over.

TABLE 3

LEGAL MARITAL STATUSES OF THE NATURAL PARENTS  
OF THE ADOLESCENT UNMARRIED MOTHERS

Length of Time	Legal Statuses		
	Married	Divorced	Separated
6-8 years	0	1	0
9-11 years	0	1	1
12-14 years	0	0	0
15-17 years	0	0	1
18-20 years	0	0	0
20 or more	4	0	0
Total	4	2	2

Parent-Child Relationships

In describing the parent-child relationships of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers studied, six categories were used. They were: (1) number of hours per week the mother of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers spent in the home, (2) participation in activities of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers with their parents within the past four years, (3) range of percentages of discipline the eight adolescent unmarried mothers



received from their parents, (4) patterns of discipline the eight adolescent unmarried mothers experienced from their parents, (5) range of percentages of rewards the eight adolescent unmarried mothers received from their parents and (6) patterns of rewards the eight adolescent unmarried mothers experienced from their parents.

It was found that three mothers of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were absent from the home within a range of forty to forty-five hours per week; three of the mothers out of the eight were absent from the home within a range of zero to five hours per week and two of the mothers out of the eight were absent from the home within a range of ten to fifteen hours per week.

It was found that six of the adolescent unmarried mothers did not participate in any activities in or outside of the home with their father within the past four years. Of the remaining two, one adolescent unmarried mother participated in activities with her father in and outside of the home within a range of one to three hours per week and one adolescent unmarried mother participated in activities in and outside of the home with her father within a range of thirteen to fifteen hours per week. It was found that five of the adolescent unmarried mothers did not participate in any activities with their mothers in or outside of the home within the past four years. Of the remaining three, two of the adolescent unmarried mothers participated in activities in and outside of the home with their mothers within a range of one to three hours per week within the past four years and one adolescent unmarried mother participated in activities with her mother in and outside of the home

within a range of seven to nine hours per week within the past four years.

It was found that five of the adolescent unmarried mothers received all their discipline from their mothers and none from their fathers. Of the remaining three adolescent unmarried mothers, two received discipline on an equal basis from both parents and one of the adolescent unmarried mothers received most of the discipline from their mothers and a limited degree from their father.

Of the total population studied, it was found that the discipline received by two of the adolescent unmarried mothers was very changeable from both parents; the discipline received by two of the adolescent married mothers was very consistent from mother and very changeable from father; the discipline received by one adolescent unmarried mother was fairly changeable from both parents and the discipline received by one adolescent unmarried mother was very consistent from both parents. The remaining two adolescent unmarried mothers lived with one parent (mother). The discipline one adolescent unmarried mother received was very changeable from her mother and the discipline one adolescent unmarried mother received was fairly consistent from her mother.

Of the total population studied, it was found that three of the adolescent unmarried mothers received all their rewards from their mothers and none from their fathers and two of the adolescent unmarried mothers received on an equal basis from both their parents. Of the remaining three adolescent unmarried mothers, two did not receive any reward from their parents and one received all her rewards from her father and none

from her mother.

Of the total population studied, it was found that the patterns of rewards experienced by five of the adolescent unmarried mothers were very changeable from both parents. Of the remaining three adolescent unmarried mothers, the rewards received by two of the adolescent unmarried mothers were fairly consistent from mother and the rewards received by one adolescent unmarried mother were fairly consistent from father and very changeable from mother.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to examine and describe carefully the parent-child relationships of eight adolescent unmarried mothers.

As previously stated the majority of adolescent unmarried mothers who come to Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio have a history of difficulties in their relationships with their parents. The study attempted to point out factors that could possibly attribute to difficulties in the parent-child relationships.

A careful analysis of the parent-child relationships of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers revealed the following factors that could possibly have some influence on the development of parent-child difficulties. First, the majority of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers did not participate in any activities in or outside of the home with their parents. These findings could possibly have some influence on the parent-child relationship in as much as the majority of the adolescent unmarried mothers verbalized feelings of rejection and indicated some degree of breakdown in communication between them and their parents. From the data presented, the researcher accepts the stated proposition that the majority of adolescent unmarried mothers who are receiving casework treatment at Family Service, Cincinnati, Ohio do not participate in

activities in or outside of the home with their parents.

Secondly, the majority of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers studied have experienced inconsistent patterns of rewards and discipline from their parents. If parents are to carry out their functions such as (1) developing a sense of security in their children, (2) offering them emotionally healthy adults with whom to identify and (3) offering them affection and companionship, it is of vital importance that both share these functions. It is equally important for parents to be consistent in carrying out the above functions. If parents are inconsistent in carrying out the above functions, particularly during the child's adolescence, these inconsistencies could possibly add to his difficulties in coping with the stresses of this particular phase of development.

The number of hours the mothers of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were absent from the home did not seem to have any influence on the parent-child relationships based on the findings. The majority of the mothers of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers were absent from the home on an average of 7.2 hours per week.

As it was significant to know the general aspects of the parent-child relationships, it was equally important to consider the specific characteristics of the adolescent unmarried mothers. The specific characteristics were race, religion, age, education and occupation and family background including living arrangements of the adolescent unmarried mothers, legal marital statuses of the natural parents and family income.

The researcher cannot say to what degree any factor pointed out was most potent, but feels each adolescent unmarried mother's case was an individual problem with various factors contributing to its development.

The researcher feels that the approach to the study of parent-child relationships of the eight adolescent unmarried mothers was limited and that a more extensive study which would divulge more information should be conducted.

## A P P E N D I X

## Interview Schedule

## A. Identifying information:

1. Case number \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Age \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Race \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Religion \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Family Background:

1. Parents living together
2. Parents divorced or separated  
(1) How long \_\_\_\_\_
3. Parent a widow or widower  
(1) How long \_\_\_\_\_
4. Parents no legal status
5. Adolescent unmarried mother living with both parents \_\_\_\_\_ one parent \_\_\_\_\_, one natural parent and one step-parent \_\_\_\_\_, foster parents \_\_\_\_\_, other relative \_\_\_\_\_, non-relative \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1) How long \_\_\_\_\_
6. Family income \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Parent-Child relationships:

1. How many hours a week did your mother spend outside the home working at a job, or in civic, social and church activities?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_ 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-15 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-45  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-55 \_\_\_\_\_ 55 or more
2. How many hours a week has your father averaged actually doing something with you during the last four years; in addition to eating with you or sleeping in the same house or just being in the same house?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ none ----- 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7-9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-12 \_\_\_\_\_ 13-15  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 15 or more
3. How many hours a week has your mother averaged actually doing something with you during the last four years; in addition to eating with you or sleeping in the same house or just being in the same house?



\_\_\_\_\_ none \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7-9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-12  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 13-15 \_\_\_\_\_ 15 or more

4. Which of the following pairs best describe by whom you were disciplined?

\_\_\_\_\_ father 0% \_\_\_\_\_ mother 100% \_\_\_\_\_ father 75% \_\_\_\_\_ mother 25%

\_\_\_\_\_ father 25% \_\_\_\_\_ mother 75% \_\_\_\_\_ father 100% \_\_\_\_\_ mother 0%

\_\_\_\_\_ father 50% \_\_\_\_\_ mother 50%

\_\_\_\_\_ by someone else (indicate whom and what percentage)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Person% \_\_\_\_\_ Person%

\_\_\_\_\_ I wasn't disciplined

5. Which of the following ways did your father tend to use most often in disciplining You?

\_\_\_\_\_ physical punishment \_\_\_\_\_ threatening to withhold affection

\_\_\_\_\_ threats of physical punishment \_\_\_\_\_ ridicule

\_\_\_\_\_ verbal scholdings \_\_\_\_\_ he didn't discipline me

\_\_\_\_\_ denial of privileges \_\_\_\_\_ withholding affection and love

\_\_\_\_\_ other (what?) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which of the following ways did your mother tend to use most often in disciplining you?

\_\_\_\_\_ physical punishment \_\_\_\_\_ threatening to withhold affection and love

\_\_\_\_\_ threats of physical punishment

\_\_\_\_\_ verbal scoldings \_\_\_\_\_ ridicule

\_\_\_\_\_ denial of Privileges \_\_\_\_\_ she didn't discipline me

\_\_\_\_\_ withholding affection and love

\_\_\_\_\_ other (what?) \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. In the following question:

"very consistent" means - you knew what to expect; discipline was about the same from time to time and if they said they would punish you or withhold favors, that's what they did.

"very changeable" means - you never knew what to expect; sometimes they would be harsh, sometimes tender, and when they said they would be harsh, sometimes tender, and when they said they would be tender, sometimes harsh, and when they said they would punish you or withhold favors, sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't

Was the discipline you received:

\_\_\_ very consistent from both parents

\_\_\_ very changeable from both parents

\_\_\_ very consistent from mother; very changeable from father

\_\_\_ very changeable from mother; very consistent from father

\_\_\_ fairly consistent from both parents

\_\_\_ fairly changeable from both parents

\_\_\_ fairly consistent from mother; fairly changeable from father

\_\_\_ fairly changeable from mother; fairly consistent from father

\_\_\_ other (what?) \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Which of the following pairs best describe by whom you were rewarded?

\_\_\_ father 0% \_\_\_ mother 100% \_\_\_ Father 75% \_\_\_ mother 25%

\_\_\_ father 25% \_\_\_ mother 75% \_\_\_ father 100% \_\_\_ mother 0%

\_\_\_ father 50% \_\_\_ mother 50%

\_\_\_ by someone else (indicate whom and what percentage)

\_\_\_\_\_ Person % \_\_\_\_\_ Person %

\_\_\_ I wasn't rewarded

9. Which of the following ways did your father tend to use most often in rewarding you?

love and affection

verbal praise

\_\_\_\_\_ gifts

           other (what?)

                     extra or special  
privileges

he didn't reward me

10. Which of the following ways did your mother tend to use most often in rewarding you?

           love and affection

verbal praise

\_\_\_\_\_ gifts

           other (what?)           

           extra or special  
privileges

           she didn't reward me

11. In the following question:

"very consistent" means - you knew what to expect; receiving rewards was about the same from time to time and if they said they would reward you, that's what they did.

"very changeable" means - you never knew what to expect; sometimes they would reward you and sometimes they wouldn't; and when they said they would reward you sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't.

**Were the rewards you received:**

           very consistent from both parents

      very changeable from both parents

           very consistent from mother; very changeable from father

\_\_\_\_\_very changeable from mother; very consistent from father

fairly consistent from both parents

                     fairly changeable from both parents

\_\_\_\_\_ fairly consistent from mother; fairly changeable from father

\_\_\_\_\_fairly changeable from mother; fairly consistent from father

other (what?)

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